

UNUSUAL FEEDING OF BLASTOBASIS DECOLORELLA WOLLASTON (LEP.: BLASTOBASIDAE). — In November 1976 I was examining a small potted Cowberry (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea* L.) on which cases of *Coleophora vitisella* Gregson were overwintering. Two leaves of the plant were spun together, and there were obvious signs of larval feeding. I assumed this was the work of *Cacoecimorpha pronubana* Hbn., which often occurs in the garden, and therefore ignored it. The larva was still feeding in February, but shortly after it vacated the spinings and pupated in a tough cocoon amongst the roots of the plant, producing a fine specimen of *Blastobasis decolorella* in mid May.

The literature quotes "vegetable rubbish and dead insects" as the larval pabulum, although the larvae have been found attacking stored apples (Jacobs, *Ent. Rec.*, **86**:27) and in captivity have been reared on sawlow and bramble leaves (Jacobs, *loc. cit.*) and catkin buds (Jacobs, *Proc. S. Lond. ent. nat. Hist. Soc.*, **1948-49**:127). I can find no record of the feral larva being found on "living" leaves. The moth itself is a regular visitor to the garden trap. — P. A. SOKOLOFF, 4 Steep Close, Orpington, Kent.

LYCAENID PUPAE THAT MIMIC ANTHROPOID HEADS. — Some time ago Professor Hinton (1974, *J. Ent. (A)*, **49** (1):67-70) added two more Lycaenid species, whose pupae he alleged mimicked the heads of monkeys. I have been hoping that someone with South American experience would comment on this, but nobody has.

I personally feel that these claims of mimicry of monkeys' heads by Lycaenid pupae are very far fetched and that there are much simpler and more probable comparisons.

Taking the original species for which this form of mimicry was claimed, *Spalgis lemolea* Druce, there has always been the alternative theory that the model was a bird dropping. When I was in Uganda some years ago, I bred considerable numbers of this species and the resemblance to a bird dropping was, to me, unmistakable. The late T. H. E. Jackson (1937, *Trans. R. ent. Soc. Lond.*, **86**:201-238) was of the same opinion. The resemblance in living specimens is much enhanced by the pupa having a polish, which is lost in dried specimens, giving the appearance of moisture.

Turning to the new species, the South American *Fenisca tarquinius* F. has a black pupa and the Oriental *Spalgis epuis* Westwood a yellowish orange one. In East Africa we have a small lycaenid, *Euchrysops barkeri* Trim., which has a black pupa, which closely resembles the dropping of a bat or mouse. The black pupa of *tarquinius* is little more than a stouter version of the black pupa of *barkeri*, and, in my opinion, is far more likely to mimic the dropping of some small mammal such as a squirrel.

The yellowish orange pupa of *epuis* bears a very strong resemblance to the pupae of many species of Coccinellid beetle, which are protected by their pungent smell.

Turning to the other side of the coin, whilst I can accept that an insect flying close by can be mistaken for a similiarly marked, but larger, species flying further away, I cannot accept that an insectivorous bird, foraging amongst foliage, can possibly mistake a small pupa, within an inch of its eyes and which it can quite easily swallow, for a monkey's head, which, in many cases, would be as large or larger than the bird itself. Apart from other considerations, decapitated monkey's heads do not usually occur, and I am sure that a bird's conception of a monkey is the beast complete with head, body, limbs and a tail, and something that is for ever on the move. I cannot believe that a bird that can spot a flying ant or termite several feet away at dusk, or which can distinguish a small, grey, stick-like geometer larva, swinging at the end of its thread several yards away from an actual piece of twig, is going to be bamboozled as Professor Hinton would have us believe. — D. G. SEVASTOPULO, F.R.E.S., P.O. Box 95026, Mombasa, Kenya.

THE PINCUSHION RISES AGAIN. — In a 1975 contribution to the *Record* ("The Rise and Fall of the Pincushion", 87: 142-146), I traced the curious role of the pincushion as an item of entomological collecting equipment from the seventeenth century to the first decades of the twentieth, and suggested that by the nineteen-twenties it was an anachronism on the Continent, used only by a few older entomologists to carry pins in the field. It is always dangerous to make such assumptions, for our brethren of the net have a way of continuing to draw upon old traditions while taking advantage of new methods. So, I should not have been surprised when, shortly after the appearance of my paper, I received a letter from my friend Professor Alexander B. Klots, announcing that "the pincushion is *not* dead".

Dr. Klots, who attended the International Congress at Vienna (1960), supported his assertion by a colour transparency he had taken there of a Catholic father in brown habit, wearing a modern version of the pincushion. By reference to the list of participants in the *Verhandlungen XI. Internationaler Kongress für Entomologie* (Vienna, 1960), and elimination of candidates by further correspondence with Dr. Klots, the subject was eventually recalled to be the German entomologist, Fr. Sigbert Wagener. In Dr. Klots' words, Fr. Wagener had "pendant over left breast a large, rectangular piece of thick felt, into which a number of insect pins were thrust. On some of these were the Zygaenidae that he was catching. As we know, these are highly resistant to cyanide, of which their blood contains a high percentage. They just keep buzzing around in cyanide jars". Fr. Wagener was smoking a cigar, and his technique, which he communicated to Dr. Klots, was "to pin a specimen immediately with a pin that he first pushed through the very wet end of the cigar. This juice did the trick on the zygaenids almost immediately".